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EARLY IRISH SCHOOLMASTERS IN NEW ENGLAND

In these days of enquiry into the history of the Irish pioneers in America, there is no feature of this subject more appropriate for research, yet none so much neglected, as that of Ireland's contribution to early American education. While the part played by the "Exiles from Erin" during the period of the Colonial and Revolutionary Wars is now being related with more or less precision and particularity,¹ as yet no friendly hand had garnered the memorials of the Irish Schoolmasters of colonial times who helped to lay the foundation of our system of public education. It is much to be regretted that some competent historian did not undertake this task many years ago, for in the lapse of time and in the neglect of opportunity, events which should have been preserved can now hardly be given with historical confidence, hardly even as tradition. But, though much has perished, many sources of information still remain; and in this hitherto unexplored mine of historical facts the writer has occasionally delved for those "golden nuggets" which have so long been hidden from the knowledge of the general reading public.

The history of the Irish Schoolmasters in the American colonies is one that is filled with special interest, and, from my knowledge of the subject, I believe it is one that should take the place of primary importance in reviewing the story of Irish achievement in this country. In that land of misfortune and travail, where, "crouching 'neath the sheltering hedge or stretched on mountain fern, the teacher and his pupils met, *feloniously to learn*," it is not to be wondered at that the schoolmaster became a wanderer and an outlaw, and the marvel of it all is that so many of them survived to join in after years that apostleship of teachers who trained the youth of the American colonies to understand better the blessings of Liberty and Independence.

It is related that on one occasion, when a member of the English House of Lords tauntingly referred to the Irish peasants as "rude and ignorant," Lord Byron promptly answered, and

¹ In recent years, several books have been published on this subject, and the publications of the American Irish Historical Society also contain much valuable and interesting data relating to the early Irish settlers.

with all the bitter sarcasm for which he was noted: "Aye, well may you call them ignorant, my Lord, when you burn the school house and hang the schoolmaster!" That pithy reply from a generous Englishman was the quintessence of the story of the Irish Schoolmaster in his own country during the time of the Penal Laws—a piece of legislation described by Edmund Burke as "one of the most frightful engines of oppression that the perverted ingenuity of man could conceive!" In connection with the Irish schoolmasters in America, therefore, it is necessary to take into account their civil status in their own country during the early years of the eighteenth century. The Penal Laws rendered it treasonable to encourage education in Ireland, to build a school house or even to send children to be taught in a neighbor's house. A reward was placed upon the head of any schoolmaster found guilty of following his profession, and the penalty was transportation as a "convict" to the West Indies or to the plantations of Virginia. Under laws of this nature, many of the Irish schoolmasters fled the country, and the people of the next generation suffered in a great measure, and learning declined. The schoolmaster had no alternative but to leave his native land, and thus it came about that what was Ireland's loss was gain to the American colonies. In many of the shipping lists containing the names, occupations and places of nativity of the *redemptioners*, who came to the colonies during the eighteenth century, frequent references to Irish schoolmasters are found, and it is a sad commentary on the educational conditions of the period that the "time" of a common laborer, in many instances, brought as high a price as that of the teacher. Evidence is abundant from authentic records of the enlightened character and competency of those Irish teachers, and that so many of them are to be found in America is a significant factor in the emigrations from Ireland during the Colonial Period. Among original sources of information the *Town Books* and the Land and Church Records are the most trustworthy, and in these early Records as well as in the Colonial newspapers, town and county histories, genealogical works, the collections of historical societies, and other such dependable sources, may be found numerous references to the Irish teachers who conducted private or "select" schools, where the youth of the colonies learned their first letters and in

many cases were prepared for entry into the more advanced schools or colleges of the country.²

The number of teachers who were graduates of Trinity College, Dublin, is remarkable. They were generally the sons of merchants and of the "well-to-do," who probably being unable to find an opening at home, crossed the seas to try their fortune in the new country. As a competent authority describes them, they were—

"the younger sons of wealthy families, being deprived of an inheritance in the ancestral estates, and were presented with the alternative of entering the learned professions or of purchasing a commission in the British Army, the idea of which, to many Irishmen, was revolting. Many of these scions of Irish families were highly educated and were graduates of Trinity College, Dublin. Emigration to America seemed a hopeful solution to the question how to obtain a livelihood, and since the younger sons of Irish families were unused to toil, and, therefore, unfitted to enter the various avocations of labor, they consequently sought the congenial employment of teaching, for which there was a demand in the various American communities. For years this business was monopolized by these younger sons, and their profession was later known as that of the early Irish Schoolmasters."³

It is an historic fact that in some parts of the Colonies, especially in Pennsylvania and Maryland, the youth of the settlements had to depend almost exclusively for their education upon immigrant Irish Schoolmasters, some of whom were refugees from government persecutions. Acrelius, the historian of *New Sweden*,⁴ in referring to the widespread ignorance among the settlers of that region about the middle of the eighteenth century says: "Forty years back our people scarcely knew what a school was, until there came over from Ireland some Presbyterians and Roman Catholics who commenced with school-keeping." Not a few of the eminent men of American history learned their letters from Irish schoolmasters and it is known that several of the Signers of the Declaration of Independence were taught by Irish immigrant tutors. For example, the historian, Lossing, in referring to Dr. Francis Allison of Donegal, Ireland, "one of the

² The writer has made a large collection of names of Irish Schoolmasters from New York, Philadelphia and other newspapers, as early as 1734 and down to and beyond the Revolutionary period.

³ HOUSTON, in *Proceedings of the Lancaster County, Pa., Historical Society*, Vol. ii, No. 2.

⁴ The three "Lower Counties" of Pennsylvania—now Delaware.

foremost scholars of his time in America," who conducted a classical school at New London, Pa., says: "Allison's chief fame to honor among men is that he was the tutor of a large number of Americans who were conspicuous actors in the events of the Revolution that accomplished the independence of the United States." Among his pupils were James Smith, Thomas McKean, and George Read, all Signers, and Charles Thomson, "the perennial Secretary of the Continental Congress." It is a singular fact, also, that the biographers of John Dickinson, celebrated as "the Penman of the Revolution," admit that he caught his argumentative and convincing style from his Irish tutor, William Killen, and the celebrated Roger Brooke Taney declares in his *Memoirs* that one of his first teachers was "an Irishman, a ripe scholar and an amiable and accomplished man."

Beginning about 1774, there is a noticeable dearth of entries in the records relating to schools and schoolmasters. The shadow of the Revolution was over the land, and no community, however small, was free from the fast gathering clouds of war. The teachers of the country were beginning to understand that a conflict with British power and arrogance was inevitable and preparations were made accordingly. In many places, the teacher turned his attention to the more pressing need of the hour and either taught his pupils to shoot and drill, or acted as clerk or adjutant to the local military company. During the decade of years between 1774 and 1784, many rural communities were entirely without the services of a tutor, for the "Master" had dropped the ferule for the rifle and marched forth with his neighbors to fight in the cause of Independence, and henceforward, it is on the rosters of the patriot forces that one must look for their names. Ample proof of this assertion may be found in the rosters of the military companies,⁵ where the occupations of the enlisted men were taken down. In the Land, Probate and other records of New York, New Jersey, Delaware, Pennsylvania, Maryland and the Carolinas, mention is made of many schoolmasters of Irish name and race who mingled their

⁵ *The Archives of Delaware*, Vol. i, contain the names of several Irish schoolmasters who joined the military companies organized in that section. Also the *Musters Rolls of the New York Provincial Troops*, as published in the *Collections* of the New York Historical Society, volume for 1897. See also *N. Y. in the Revolution*, the *Archives of New Jersey*, and *Penna. Archives*, published by authority of the State Legislatures.

teaching of the rudiments of learning with a sound American patriotism, and many of whom joined the patriot forces and after the war quietly resumed the practice of their profession. In New England, Irish schoolmasters are found teaching the children of the Puritans long before the days of the Revolution, and one of the leading authorities on the early history of that section wrote more than sixty years ago: "Many aged people of the present day in New Hampshire well remember the stories told by their fathers of the old Irish schoolmasters. Those schoolmasters were almost always of good families at home and were well educated and men of enterprise. Of this class was John Sullivan, of whom it was said that he could speak Latin and French with ease and fluency when he was 100 years old."⁶ This noted New England educator was a native of Limerick and was a descendant of the Lords of Beare Haven, an ancient Irish family of the Counties of Cork and Kerry. He taught classical schools in Maine and New Hampshire for more than half a century⁷ and it is related that on his arrival here in the year 1723, in order to show that he was competent to teach, "he wrote his application for employment in seven languages."⁸ He is first mentioned as a teacher in the Minutes of the Meeting of the Selectmen of the Town of Dover, N. H., under date of May 20, 1723, where his name is recorded by the Town Clerk as "Master Sullefund." He is referred to as a man of great natural abilities and mental cultivation and as the instructor for many successive generations of his neighbors he acquired much influence over them as they grew to manhood.⁹ As an instance of his versatility, it is said that he was called upon to draw up all the wills, deeds and other legal papers in the simple, rural community about him and was their confidant and counsellor in all cases of trouble and difficulty.¹⁰ An obituary notice of his death said: "This respected and extraordinary character was employed till he was 90 years of age in teaching

⁶ Cf. *New England Historical and Genealogical Register*: volume for 1853.

⁷ Portsmouth, N. H., *Oracle of the Day*, June 22, 1796. See also various sketches of his career in the *Journals of the American Irish Historical Society*, and *New England Historical and Genealogical Register*.

⁸ *Records of Scotland Parish, Me.*, kept by Rev. Dr. Moody. See also *The Ancestors of General John Sullivan*, by Bernard Coll, in *American Catholic Historical Researches*, Vol. xviii, No. 2.

⁹ T. C. AMORY, *Life of James Sullivan, Governor of Massachusetts*. Boston, 1859.

¹⁰ T. C. AMORY. *Life of James Sullivan*. Boston, 1859.

public and private schools and perhaps few persons ever diffused so much useful learning.”¹¹

This Irish American teacher stands out as a splendid type of “the early Irish schoolmaster” and, with all propriety, he surely may be ranked among the Fathers of the Republic. As an historical writer has so pithily expressed it: “He was the father of a Governor of New Hampshire, and of a Governor of Massachusetts, of an Attorney-General of New Hampshire and Massachusetts, of New Hampshire’s only Major-General in the Continental Army, of the first Judge appointed by Washington in New Hampshire and of four sons who were officers in the Continental Army. He was grandfather of an Attorney-General of New Hampshire, of a Governor of Maine and of a United States Senator from Maine. He was great-grandfather of an Attorney-General of New Hampshire and great-great-grandfather of an officer in the Thirteenth New Hampshire Regiment in the Civil War.”¹² Such was the Irish schoolmaster, John Sullivan, from the city of the Broken Treaty. Banned in his native country and driven across the seas by English oppression, he lighted the torch of learning in the Western Continent and thus forged a link in the chain which binds America to Ireland in an unbroken bond of sympathy.

The first teacher to appear in New England records was John Higginson who set up a school at Hartford, Conn., in 1637. He was a native of England, yet his name suggests a probable Irish origin, for there were many Higginsons in New England descended from Irish people named Higgins, whose ancestors first settled in England from where members of the family emigrated to the Colonies. Indeed, Higgins is but a modern form or literal translation of MacHiggin, a name derived from the Irish word *Uigin*, meaning “knowledge.” Several of the “Mac” families in Ireland translated their names in the same manner, such as the MacDonnells who became Donnelson, the MacNeills who became Neilson, and so one. We find an example of the change from Higgins to Higginson in the genealogy of the descendants of Richard Higgins, who came to Eastham, Mass., in 1644, where he became a prominent man and was the ancestor of numerous families named Higginson scattered through the Eastern States. The local town historian informs us that he found the name on the town records as “Higginson” and that the original ancestor of the people of that name was “Richard

¹¹ In Portsmouth, N. H., *Oracle of the Day*, June 22, 1796.

¹² John C. Linehan, in *Journals of the American Irish Historical Society*.

Higgins, of Celtic origin."¹³ Another of the family, Fergus Higgins, came direct from Ireland to Scarboro, Me. Some of his New England descendants claim their ancestors "came from England," but a Maine historian asks: "Did they come from Belfast, Dublin or Cork, *via* Liverpool, and is this the way they came from England?"¹⁴

William Collins who came to New Haven in the year 1640, with a number of Irish refugees from Barbadoes, is referred to in the Journal of John Winthrop, Colonial Governor of Connecticut, as "a young scholar full of zeal." He established and taught school at Hartford as can be seen from a sketch of the pioneer in Felt's *Ecclesiastical History of New England*. The period of his service as a teacher is unknown, but it could not have been very long for we are told that he and his wife, Bridget Collins, were murdered by Indians in the year 1643 in the vicinity of what is now New Rochelle, N. Y., and it is said that some of those who accompanied Collins from Barbadoes returned to Ireland. This is the only authority for including his name in this list of early Irish schoolmasters in New England.

The earliest female teacher in New England, of whom we have any authentic history, was Margaret Healy. It is difficult to determine whether she was of the Irish race. The town records of Cambridge, Mass., contain an entry reading: "In March, 1680, for English our school dame was good wife Healy." No other reference can be found to the "good" Mistress Healy, who taught the children of that famous University town so long ago, but she is mentioned in the records as "the wife of Willyam Healy," an Irishman, who was an inhabitant of the town as early as 1664.¹⁵

Several members of the Irish family of FitzGerald taught schools in Massachusetts in early Colonial days. The select men of the town of Long Meadow, surely indicated the need of the schoolmaster when, on September 30, 1714, they "Voated to Gitt or have a Schoole master to Teach or Learn our Children to Read and rite,"¹⁶ and the only man they could find for the place was an Irishman named James Gerrald or FitzGerald. In 1717 he seems to have removed to Springfield, for in that year "James Gerrald" received "the approbation of the Selectmen for permission to open a Schoole."¹⁷ In 1718 an Irish colony located at Worcester and here their leader, a Presbyterian clergyman named Edward Fitzgerald, established a school for the benefit of the children of this and the neighboring settlements. The records of the ancient town of Scituate, Mass., show that "Richard Fitzgerald, a veteran Latin schoolmaster" was teaching a classical school there in 1729, and on May 14, 1734, he was chosen to teach the children of the neighboring settlement of Hanover. On the church records of that town it is stated

¹³ FREEMAN, *Annals of Eastham, Mass.*

¹⁴ GIDEON T. RIDLON, *Saco Valley Settlements and Families*. Portland, Me., 1865.

¹⁵ *Records of the General Court of Massachusetts Bay*, of August 17, 1664.

¹⁶ Town Books of Long Meadow, Mass.

¹⁷ Town Books of Springfield, Mass.

that "Fitzgerald was the schoolmaster of the town for nearly twenty years."¹⁸ He is described by local historians as "a man of talent, well skilled in the languages, especially Latin, and under his judicious training many were reared who afterwards became distinguished in the town and State."¹⁹ One of his pupils was William Cushing, afterwards to become famous as Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States.²⁰

In 1737, Peter Pelham, an Irishman, made application to the Selectmen to open a school at Boston.²¹ He was one of the charter members of the Charitable Irish Society, founded at Boston on St. Patrick's Day, 1737, and is described by New England historians as "the father of fine arts in New England" and as "one of the Irish nation residing in Boston." At a meeting of the Selectmen of the Town of Boston on October 15, 1740, there was read "the Petition of Mr. Cornelius Lynch, Praying that Liberty may be Granted him to Open a School in this Town for the teaching of Reading, Writing, Arithmetick, Navigation," etc., and on November 19, the Town "voted that the said Linch be and hereby is approved of so long as he Continues to behave himself to the Approbation of the Selectmen."²²

At Amesbury, Mass., John Hickey was one of the town teachers in the year 1751.²³ "An Irishman named Toler" is described as one of the schoolmasters of the town of Stoneham, Mass.,²⁴ "in the olden times." The period that he flourished is not mentioned, but another town historian²⁵ refers to a "Captain William Toler," who taught there as early as 1763, and who, doubtless, was the same. In 1750, and for some years thereafter, John Kenney was the schoolmaster at Canton, Mass., and he also conducted a private school for some time at Stoughton, Mass. He seems to have been a learned man for those times and is said to have had a remarkable faculty for drawing up "unbreakable wills," deeds, leases and indenture; and made a successful business of it. He was one of the Minute Men from that district in 1775. In the brig, *William* from Ireland, which arrived at Boston on September 29, 1766, there are listed among her passengers "Mr. Barry Schoolmaster and Timothy Dorson Schoolmaster,"²⁶ but it is uncertain whether either of them

¹⁸ *Records of the First Congregational Church at Hanover, Mass.*, compiled by LLOYD VERNON BRIGGS. Boston, 1895.

¹⁹ JOHN STETSON BARRY, *Historical Sketches of the Town of Hanover, Mass.* Boston, 1853.

²⁰ HENRY FLANDERS, *Lives and Times of the Chief Justices of the Supreme Court of the United States*. Phila., 1855.

²¹ One of his advertisements, announcing "the opening of a new school," may be seen in the *Boston News Letter*, of September 12, 1748.

²² *Minutes of the Selectmen of the Town of Boston*, 6th Book, pp. 258 and 263.

²³ JOSEPH MERRILL, *History of Amesbury, Mass.* Haverhill, Mass., 1880.

²⁴ SILAS DEAN. *A Brief History of the Town of Stoneham, Mass.*, Boston, 1843.

²⁵ WILLIAM B. STEVENS. *History of Stoneham, Mass.*, Stoneham, 1891.

²⁶ Miscellaneous papers relating to the early History of Boston, in 29th volume of the Town Books.

followed that calling in America. Lawrence and Peter McLouth, brothers, are mentioned as "old time pedagogues" of the town of Farmington, Ontario County, N. Y.²⁷ They were born at Taunton, Mass., of Irish parentage and we are told that "the father of the McLouths was educated in Maynooth College, Ireland, and after coming to this country taught a grammar school in Massachusetts, where John Hancock was one of his pupils."²⁸ Four of the family served in the War of the Revolution, among them the two Farmington school teachers. When or where the McLouth school was located is not known for certain, but it was probably at Quincy, Mass. The Irish teacher is not mentioned by any of Hancock's biographers.

John O'Rourke made "application for the approbation of the Selectmen" at Boston on December 7, 1781, "to teach the French language in this town," and was approved of "provided he first take the Oath of Allegiance required by the Commonwealth."²⁹ Michael Walsh was one of the best known schoolmasters of his time in Massachusetts. He was born in Ireland in 1763 and was educated at Trinity College, Dublin. In 1792 he was appointed teacher at Marblehead and later taught at Amesbury and Salisbury, Mass. "By his system of teaching," we are told, "he exercised a remarkable influence over his pupils." He acquired a great reputation in New England on account of his wide knowledge of the classics and mathematical sciences, and it is said his fame extended as far as the West Indies. One of his pupils at Marblehead was Joseph Story, afterwards a Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States. In the autobiography of Justice Story, the Irish teacher is thus referred to: "My best classical instruction, such as it was, I principally owed to Mr. Michael Walsh, then Usher in the Academy, and author of a work on Mental Arithmetic." He traces back to Walsh his "earliest knowledge of English literature" and his "inextinguishable love for the great masters of that literature in former times."³⁰ John Walsh, son of this famous schoolmaster, became a mathematician and instructor in the United States Navy and his daughters, Joanna and Betsey Walsh, were school teachers at Salisbury Point, Mass.

In 1742 Thomas McGee came to Sutton, Mass., and soon after was appointed schoolmaster. The records of the town of Chester, N. H., where he first settled, show that he was an immigrant from Ireland. Fifteen years later, John McKinstry, a native of Brode Parish, County Antrim, is mentioned as the teacher of the youth of the settlement. Charles Gleason was hired as Schoolmaster by the town of Framingham in 1738, and John Gleason, thought to be his son, was one of the local teachers in 1794. At Chicopee, Mass., we learn that the first school

²⁷ CHAS. F. MILLIKEN, *History of Ontario County, N. Y., and Its People*. New York, 1911.

²⁸ LEWIS CASS ALDRICH, *History of Ontario County, N. Y.* Syracuse, N. Y., 1893.

²⁹ *Minutes of the Selectmen of the Town of Boston*.

³⁰ *Life and Letters of Justice Story*, by his son, Wm. H. Story. Boston, 1851.

was erected in 1773, and that "its premier teacher was an Irishman."³¹ Evidently, he was a versatile individual, for we are told that he "occasionally preached to the people on the south side of the river." Even at "Plymouth of the Puritans" we find traces of an Irish schoolmaster. At a meeting of the Selectmen of Plymouth on September 9, 1782, the town treasurer was directed "to Collect from the several Collectors that are in Debt to the Towne the value of what is due from the Towne to their late Schoolmasters, viz: Messrs. Timothy Healey and Joseph Crocker."³² While there is no other reference in the town books to these teachers and there is nothing to show what their nationality was, the name of Timothy Healey fully warrants the assumption that he was an Irishman. The town records of Worcester mention John Young, Schoolmaster, in the year 1757. The Young Genealogy shows that the schoolmaster was a native of County Donegal, Ireland. Butler Fogarty established a private school at Salem in 1792, and continued teaching there for many years.

The large Irish settlements in New Hampshire during the first half of the eighteenth century probably account for the many Irish schoolmasters who are recorded in the annals of the "Granite State" during that period. The town of Dover must have had considerable attractions for them, for besides John Sullivan, we find a number of his countrymen teaching school at Dover in its early days. One of them, Humphrey Sullivan, on February 19, 1723, "preferred a Petition to the Board Praying for £50 to be paid by ye Towne of Dover for his services there as Schoolmaster."³³ In all probability, this was the same Humphrey Sullivan, teacher of the youth of Hampton, N. H. On September 28, 1714, the Selectmen of Hampton chose a committee "to hire a Schoolmaster for the Town," and while the records do not show who was "hired," the name of the local teacher appears in the *Minutes of the Old Parish* under date of September 18, 1718, as "ye late Schoolmaster Humphrey Sullivan."³⁴

Hercules Mooney, a native of Longford, Ireland, who is said to have been tutor to the family of an Irish nobleman, came to Dover in the year 1733 and, as is shown by the public records, was "engaged January 2, 1734, to teach school." He taught at Dover for sixteen years, and established a school at Durham, N. H., in 1751, which he continued until 1766, interrupted only by the period of his services in the French English war. As colonel of a New Hampshire battalion of the Continental Army, he served with distinction throughout the Revolution and after the War he resumed the practice of his profession in the town of Lee. "The record of Colonel Mooney and his sons, as schoolmasters, officers in the Seven Years War, in the War of the Revolu-

³¹ CLARA SKEELE PALMER, *The Annals of Chicopee, Mass.* Springfield, Mass., 1899.

³² *Plymouth Town Records*, Vol. iii.

³³ *Provincial Papers of New Hampshire*, Vol. iv, p. 83.

³⁴ Town Records of Hampton, N. H.

tion and in civil positions, was a notable one. Mooney was one of those men whom circumstances develop into leaders almost instantly when the exigences of the case demand them."³⁵

Darby Kelly, "a bright quick-witted Irishman," was one of the first teachers of New Hampton, N. H., and, as the town historian says of him: "school teaching and fighting the French and Indians kept him busy!"³⁶ We find his name in connection with several land transactions at Exeter as early as 1728, and between 1748 and 1756 he served as a soldier in the French and Indian wars and when there was no more fighting to be done Darby Kelly quickly resumed his occupation of "guide and mentor" to the youth of New Hampton and the neighboring settlements.³⁷

Edward Fitzgerald taught school at Boscawen, N. H., in 1734. He is described in the annals of the town as "a native of Ireland and a man of good education" and as "one of the most active and influential of the settlers of 1733."³⁸ A local historian³⁹ names him among "the first settlers at Boscawen." "John Carroll, an Irishman and a school-teacher," taught at Rye, N. H., in 1790.⁴⁰

Rudolphus Greene was an early schoolmaster in New Hampshire. He is referred to as "an Irishman who was employed by the town of Peterborough to keep school a quarter of the year in each of the four quarters of the town."⁴¹ At Weare, N. H., William Donovan was the town teacher in 1773, and a local historian tells us that, "after the Revolution there were a great number of foreigners teaching in the country and Irish schoolmasters were plenty in Weare."⁴² Among these, he mentions Richard Adams and "Master" Donovan, the latter having been the "first to teach English grammar in the town;" and, from the same authority we learn that "the first school at East Weare was kept by Master O'Neil on the strict moral suasion plan."⁴³

Maurice Lynch, a native of Galway, Ireland, began teaching at Antrim, N. H., in 1772 and continued there until 1777, when he joined the patriot army. He is described in the annals of the town as "a man of great wit, whose sayings lived locally for more than a century after his death" (1784). Tobias Butler, "clerk of the town of Antrim, in

³⁵ EZRA H. STEARNS, *Genealogical and Family History of the State of New Hampshire*, p. 910.

³⁶ FRANK H. KELLY, *Reminiscences of New Hampton, N. H.* Worcester, 1889.

³⁷ TOWN RECORDS OF EXETER, N. H.

³⁸ CHARLES C. COFFIN, *Genealogical Records in History of Boscawen and Webster, N. H.* Concord, 1878.

³⁹ REV. EBENEZER PRICE, *A Chronological Register of Boscawen, N. H.* Concord, 1823.

⁴⁰ LANGDON B. PARSONS, *History of the Town of Rye, N. H., From Its Discovery and Settlement to 1903.* Concord, 1905.

⁴¹ J. H. MORRISON, *Life of Jeremiah Smith, Chief Justice and Governor of New Hampshire.* Boston, 1845.

⁴² W. LITTLE, *History of the Town of Weare, N. H.* Lowell, Mass., 1888.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

1788," who was also from Galway, emigrated to America in 1771. He first settled at New Boston and from that town he enlisted in the army of the Revolution and "passed through many of the conflicts of New York." He opened a school at Antrim in 1786, which he maintained "for many years," and was known as "Old Master Butler" to the people of the surrounding country, whose children he trained for two generations. A town historian refers to him as "a man of fine education and exceedingly useful in his day."⁴⁴

Edward Evans, a native of Sligo, kept a school at Salisbury, N. H., prior to the opening of the Revolutionary War. Teaching was not his only calling, for his name is found among the Salisbury volunteers who fought at the battle of Bunker Hill, and on the roster of the officers and soldiers of Colonel Stickney's New Hampshire regiment who fought at Bennington on August 16, 1777, is this entry: "Adjutant Edward Evans, who was Schoolmaster at Salisbury." After the War he established a school at Northfield, N. H., where, it is said, "Daniel Webster was one of his pupils."⁴⁵ Henry Parkinson is referred to in Northfield town records as "one of the oldest teachers" at that place. He also was an officer in the patriot army, and that he was a native of Ireland we may judge from the quaint Latin epitaph (said to have been written by himself) on his tombstone at Canterbury, N. H., where he died in 1820. It reads, "Hibernia begot me; Columbia nurtured me; Nassau Hall educated me; I have fought, I have taught, I have labored with my hands!"

Timothy Gleason is mentioned in Canterbury records as a school teacher, where, in 1790, he was paid for his services "in wheat, rye, and Indian corn." One of the town historians says "he came from Scotland, but was of Irish descent." We are told "he was often employed as a teacher in Northfield and other surrounding towns. He was a fine scribe and used to assist the Selectmen in making the taxes and keeping their accounts." Like so many others of his calling, he joined the Revolutionary Army and, according to his application for a pension in 1814, he served "from 1775 to the end of the campaign."

The first teacher at Francestown, N. H. (in 1781), was Richard Burke.⁴⁶ The first president of Bowdoin College was Joseph McKeen, "a man of fine acquirements and ripe scholarship," who opened a school at Londonderry, N. H., in 1774. He was a son of John McKeen, a native of Ballymoney, Ireland, who came to New Hampshire with the pioneer band of Irish immigrants who settled the town of Londonderry in the year 1719.

Patrick Quinlan taught school at Concord, N. H., before 1770.⁴⁷

⁴⁴ WARREN R. COCHRANE, *History of the Town of Antrim, N. H.* Manchester, N. H., 1880.

⁴⁵ THOMAS HAMILTON MURRAY, in *Journals of the American Irish Historical Society*.

⁴⁶ WARREN R. COCHRAN, *History of Francestown, N. H.* Nashua, 1895.

⁴⁷ NATHANIAL BOUTON, *A History of Concord, N. H., from Its First Grant in 1725 to 1853.* Concord, 1856.

Patrick Garvan was also an early tutor at Concord, and although the period that he flourished is not mentioned, I find his name on the roster of the local military company of the year 1746 as a defender of the garrison against the Indians. "Among the names of the early school teachers," says one of the historians of the town of Bedford,⁴⁸ "that of O'Neil is handed down as memorable." The period is not mentioned, but, one John O'Neil who appears on a list of "the first settlers of the town," in all probability was the schoolmaster. Luke Eagan also taught school at Bedford "about 1776 or 1777," and afterwards served as a soldier in the Revolutionary War.⁴⁹

From the records of the town of New Boston we learn that "in 1769 the town erected a small building near the meeting house which was used as a school," and here we find Dennis Dunnivan teaching the youth of the district in the stirring days of 1776. William McNeill, of an Irish immigrant family, who settled at Londonderry and who taught at New Boston about the same time, fought at the Battle of Bunker Hill. "Master" Butler, school teacher at Nottingham, N. H., for many years after his arrival there in 1756, is described as "a man of great natural intellect and extensive information." He was a son of Malachi Butler, an Irishman, who settled at Windham, Conn., in the year 1720.

Among a number of interesting entries concerning schools and schoolmasters found in an old "account book of the Selectmen," still preserved among the town records of Chester, N. H., appear the following:

1750, Paid to Master John Hickey for Schooling.....	£88
1751, Paid to Master John Hickey for Schooling.....	£104
1761, Paid to John Crombie, two months.....	£100
1772, Master Donovan, 3 months and one week.....	£9. 15s.

There cannot be much doubt about the nationality of "Master John Hickey," and as to Crombie, the genealogical records of the town of Chester inform us that he was "a native of Ballymore, Ireland," and "Master Donovan," in all likelihood was the same old-time pedagogue already mentioned as the town teacher at Weare, N. H. Among other schoolmasters at Chester whose names appear in the town books were, Andrew Craig (1752), a native of Ireland, and Samuel Moore, who taught there in 1749 and in 1764 at the nearby town of Candia. Moore was a son of John Moore who came from Ireland to New Hampshire in the early part of the eighteenth century. The town also informs us that "George Russel, a native of Ireland," who served as a soldier in the American army after the battle of Lexington, "came to Chester after the war and turned pedagogue and for a long period taught in nearly all the schools in the Long Meadows." We are told he was "an able teacher" and "an accomplished man" and "was looked upon with about the same reverence that the minister was." Samuel Moore, referred to

⁴⁸ *Centennial History of the Town of Bedford, N. H.* 1850.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

as "an Irishman," taught at Derryfield, N. H., in 1797, succeeding John McLaughlin who was appointed town teacher in 1795.

One of the earliest teachers whose name appears on the records of the town of Kittery, Me., was Eugene Lynch who taught there in 1718,⁵⁰ and in some "Extracts from Kittery Point Town Records" of the year 1732,⁵¹ mention is made of "John Maloney, Schoolmaster," with a payment to him of £80, for his services in that year.

The Gillpatricks, who were among the earliest settlers at Biddeford, Me., gave several noted teachers to that part of the country. The family came from Ireland in 1735. Miriam Gillpatrick, who was born at Limerick in 1767, taught at Biddeford; Joseph Gillpatrick conducted a school at Wells, another Joseph at Hollis, while still another of the family, Thomas Gillpatrick, is referred to as "one of the most noted teachers at Limerick and Limington, Me., having taught in no less than eleven town schools and five high schools in the Saco Valley."⁵²

In 1750 the only school at Kennebunk, Me., was in charge of "Daniel Little, an Irishman." He appears to have been a man of much local influence, and we are informed by the town historian that "Master Little was one of the intellectual giants of the day." His successor at the Kennebunk school was "Daniel Moffatt, an Irishman." An entry on the town records of Kennebunkport of the year 1747 reads: "Mr. Samuel Murphy was chosen Scoole Master." He was a son of John Murphy, who served as an officer of a military company at the capture of Louisburg and four of whose sons, among them Samuel the "Scoole Master," served in the Revolutionary War. One of Samuel Murphy's successors at Kennebunkport was "Master Hickey," whose name appears on the tax list of the town of Kittery of the year 1752. One John Hickey, probably the same, is mentioned as teacher of a school at Cape Porpoise, Me., in 1766.

Silvester Murphy was a teacher at Pownalburgh and Sheepscott, Me., in 1775. Luke Reilly taught at Newry, Me., in 1781. A local historian says,⁵³ "he was a famous schoolmaster in his day and it was he who named the town Newry from the place in Ireland whence he came." In 1796, John O'Neil kept school at Canaan, Me.⁵⁴ An old time New England pedagogue named Sullivan is mentioned in local annals of Bristol and Bremen, Me., about the middle of the eighteenth century, but of whom definite information is hard to obtain. But, "Master Sullivan," who "came from Ireland to Broad Bay in the year 1737,"⁵⁵ is thought

⁵⁰ EVERETT S. STACKPOLE, *Old Kittery and Her Families*. Lewiston, Me., 1893.

⁵¹ D. M. SHAPLEIGH, in *Maine Historical and Genealogical Recorder*, Vol. i.

⁵² GIDEON T. RIDLON, *Saco Valley Settlements and Families*. Portland, Me., 1865.

⁵³ WILLIAM BARRY LAPHAM, *Centennial History of Norway and Oxford County, Me.* Portland, Me., 1886.

⁵⁴ JOHN W. HANSON, *History of the Old Towns of Norridgewock and Canaan, Me.* Boston, 1849.

⁵⁵ *Records of the Court of Common Pleas at York, Me., under date of June 12, 1770.*

to have been the schoolmaster. Martin Rourke, or O'Rourke, is mentioned as "the foremost schoolmaster of the town of Durham."⁵⁶ He was a native of Ireland and came to America in 1773 and served as a sergeant in the Revolutionary army at Ticonderoga and other engagements, and after the war he served for seventeen years as Town Clerk of Durham. At Buxton, Me., "Francis Morrissey and John Hearn from Ireland" taught schools in 1794,⁵⁷ and at this place we are told "Master Morrissey was employed in teaching for about fifteen years."⁵⁸

At Thomaston, Me., John Sullivan, a native of Dublin, Ireland, opened a school in the year 1778.⁵⁹ Racy of the soil, Schoolmaster Sullivan was one of the native wits of the section. We are told "his love for science was pure and he was ever ready to aid others in its pursuit," and "his store of scientific and literary information, history and other anecdotes was inexhaustible."⁶⁰ It is evident that he was a valuable acquisition to the intellectual progress of the youth of the surrounding country, where he taught for many years. He may possibly have been the same John Sullivan whose name is found in the town records of Warren, Me., of the year 1792. The Warren Schoolmaster, we are told, had "made respectable attainments in science and possessed a highly cultivated taste in literature." As a teacher, "he excelled" and "was evidently a walking cyclopedia." Bartholomew Killaran was the schoolmaster of Warren in 1771.⁶¹ The town historian says "he was highly esteemed for his amiable disposition and not the less so that in place of birch and ferule he was obliged to make use of loaf sugar to stimulate and encourage his pupils." His countryman, "John O'Brien from County Cork, Ireland," who conducted a school at Warren in 1782, was not so lenient with his pupils, for, while "he was an elegant penman and a good accountant, he was somewhat severe in the management of his scholars."⁶² O'Brien's descendants were a noted family of ship-builders and sailing masters on the Kennebeck river.

Robert Mathews, who first came from Ireland to Woburn, Mass., settled in Warren, where, we are told, "he was sometimes employed as a schoolmaster and in the French and Indian War (1755) he served for some time as a soldier." In 1788, "William Walsh, a native of Dublin, Ireland," was "hired to keep the town school at Thomaston for the term of twelve months," and in 1791 the town books indicate payments to him "for keeping school in the Northeast Meadow District." Another teacher employed at Thomaston about 1790 was "Thomas Emerson, a man of good education, an excellent penman and of respectable family in or near Limerick, Ireland." The names of several Irish school-

⁵⁶ EVERETT S. STACKPOLD, *History of Durham, Me.* Lewiston, Me., 1899.

⁵⁷ EBEN WENTWORTH, in *Centennial History of the Town of Buxton, Me.* 1872.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ CYRUS EATON, *History of Thomaston and Rockland, Me.* Hallowell, Me., 1865.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶¹ CYRUS EATON, *Annals of the Town of Warren, Me.* Hallowell, Me., 1851.

⁶² *Ibid.*

masters appear on the town records of Brunswick, Me. The pioneer teacher at that place was James McCashlen, who, in 1740, was paid £40 for his services as tutor. From the *Pejepscot Papers* we learn that "William McClanahan, an Irishman," taught school at Brunswick in the year 1741, and a well-known Maine historian⁶³ informs us that McClanahan first came to Belfast, Me., in the year 1734. In 1755, John Blake was employed as teacher at Brunswick and four years later he was succeeded by John Farrin, who seems to have taught there again in 1776, and he is on record in that year for returning the greater part of his salary to the town "in consequence of the public distresses and burdensome taxes." His father was a native of Dublin, Ireland, who settled at Ipswich, Mass., where the elder Farrin conducted a school for six years prior to his advent at Brunswick. Richard Flaherty is also mentioned as one of Brunswick's early schoolmasters, and in the *History of Cumberland County, Me.*,⁶⁴ it is related that in the year 1735 the inhabitants of Brunswick made application to the Government of Massachusetts for an act of incorporation as a town and among those who signed the petition was "Richard Flaherty, an Irish Schoolmaster."

"Thomas Crowell, an Irishman," taught at Brunswick, where he arrived from Ireland "soon after the Revolution."⁶⁵ We learn that "he was a man of good education and soon after his arrival he engaged in teaching school and for more than a score of years he taught in the eastern part of this town."⁶⁶

In Reed's *History of Bath, Me.*, the author in referring to the early times, says: "The children of the inhabitants had good teachers. One particularly, Master O'Brien, who was educated in Edinburgh, Scotland, was a gentleman and an excellent scholar." In the early days of the New England towns, in order to establish a private school it was necessary for the "Master" to receive the approval of, and permit his school to be subject to supervision by, the local authorities, and in the town records may be seen references to teachers who failed to comply with this regulation and who were obliged to abandon the attempt and remove to some other place, where they could follow their calling without official "red tape." Willis⁶⁷ says that "in 1761 great excitement was produced in the town by the conduct of a schoolmaster named Richmond. He was an Irishman. In 1761, he was bound over to appear before the Court of General Sessions to answer his being presented for setting up and keeping school in Falmouth, without the approbation of the Selectmen." Master McMahon evidently was more in favor than his unfortunate countryman, or perhaps was not so obstinate in complying with the regulations, for we are told

⁶³ WILLIAM WILLIS, *History of Portland, Me.* Portland, 1865.

⁶⁴ W. W. CLAYTON. Philadelphia, 1880.

⁶⁵ *Town Records.*

⁶⁶ From a Paper read before the Brunswick Historical Society, by Sumner L. Holbrook. Cf. WHEELER, *History of Brunswick, Me.* Boston, 1878.

⁶⁷ WM. WILLIS, *History of Portland, Me.* Portland, 1865.

that "in 1767, William McMahon, an Irishman, opened a school at Stroudwater and afterwards kept at Woodford's Corners for several years, where Portland boys were sent out to him." "John Mitchell, a native of Ireland," was one of the early schoolmasters at Belfast, Me.⁶⁸ The town historian also refers to "John Barrett, school teacher, who came to Londonderry from Ireland in 1719." There is no record, as far as I can find, to his having taught school at Belfast, but he is thought to have followed that calling. In the immediate vicinity of Belfast, in the towns of Waldo and Searsmont, one Lewis Ryan taught school in the early years of the last century, and Michael Ryan taught at Rockland in 1778.⁶⁹ The first teachers at Vinalhaven, Me., of whom we have any record were "John O'Brien, who escaped from the British service,"⁷⁰ and Michael Bowen, who served with some distinction in the War of the Revolution, and who settled at Vinalhaven, where we are told "his business was farming and school teaching."⁷¹ Both were natives of Cork, Ireland. The first teacher on record at Monmouth, Me., was "William Lowney, who performed the important duties of the ancient pedagogue in the local public school." The town records do not inform us what his nationality was, but that he was an Irishman, is seen from the remark of the local historian that "his only drawback was the brogue he brought from Erin."⁷² John Magner, who "came from Dublin, Ireland, about 1791," was "noted for his smartness in school teaching" and it was he who "taught the first school in the town of Greene."⁷³ Thomas Boyd, "born in Ireland in 1748," was one of the pioneer teachers at Boothbay, Me.,⁷⁴ and "Master Kennard from Ireland" came to Windham in 1781 and "was employed by the people of the town as a teacher for many years."⁷⁵ John Patterson, who taught at Windham in 1773, is also described as "an Irishman."⁷⁶ The youth of the little colony of Rhode Island profited well by the advent of the Irish schoolmaster. Rev. James MacSparran was a leading teacher in Rhode Island from 1721 to 1747, and one whose educational influence had much to do with the founding of Rhode Island College, now called Brown University, and "it is a singular fact," declares Guild, in his history of that institution, that "the first funds of the College were obtained from Ireland." Dr. MacSparran was a native of Dungiven, County Derry, and was one of the noted Gaelic scholars of his time.

⁶⁸ JOSEPH WILLIAMSON, *History of the City of Belfast, Me.* Portland, 1913.

⁶⁹ Town Register of Searsmont, Me.

⁷⁰ *Brief Historical Sketch of the Town of Vinalhaven, Me.* Rockland, Me., 1900.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

⁷² H. H. COCHRANE, *History of the Towns of Monmouth and Wales, Me.* East Winthrop, Me., 1894.

⁷³ A. W. TINKHAM, in the Winthrop, Me., *Budget*, 1891.

⁷⁴ FRANCIS B. GREENE, *Boyd Genealogy*, in *History of Boothbay, Me.* Portland, 1906.

⁷⁵ *Collections of Maine Historical Society*, 2d Ser., Vol. ix.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

George Taylor, a native of Limerick, was appointed schoolmaster of the town of Providence in the year 1735 and continued teaching there until his death in 1781. An obituary notice of him in the *Providence Gazette* said: "he was an honor to the country that gave him birth." The name of Stephen Jackson appears in the records of the town as a teacher in the year 1745. He was born in Kilkenny in 1700 and, as he said himself, he "left Ireland to escape the political persecutions." John Dorrance, son of Irish immigrants, was a private tutor at Providence in 1774. A notice of his death⁷⁷ said "he was a man of unblemished integrity and undeviating patriotism and for many years was a member of the Rhode Island Legislature." Terence O'Reilly kept a school at Providence in 1788⁷⁸ and probably for several years before that time, for I find his name in the town records as early as 1770. James Wilson, described as "an Irishman," taught there in 1791 and John Phelan in 1792. The "Town Book" of Triverton, R. I., under date of August 15, 1743, shows that Benjamin Delaney was appointed "Town Schoolmaster for ye year insuing," and John and Samuel Healey are mentioned among "the early teachers" of the nearby town of Pawtucket.⁷⁹ One of the earliest teachers at Westerly, of whom tradition or the records speak, was an Irishman named Thomas Slattery, who set up a private school there a short time after the Revolutionary war. A local historian refers to him as "a man of extensive learning for his day."⁸⁰ "Old Master Kelly," described as "one of the earliest school teachers in Rhode Island," taught for many years at South Kingston. We are told that "Master Kelly was an Irishman and noted for his love of a good joke, a good dinner and his courtesy of manner." In 1751, Terence Donnelly was engaged by the town of Newport as schoolmaster and two of the "old-time pedagogues of Rhode Island," named Crocker and Knox, who kept school at Bowen's hill after the Revolution, were natives of Ireland.⁸¹ The name of Berkeley, the famous Bishop of Cloyne, County Cork, is inseparably linked with early educational efforts in New England. He was born in Kilkenny in 1688, and in his fortieth year he came to Rhode Island for the purpose of founding a college, and although his efforts were frustrated, through the intrigues of an English nobleman, the historians all admit that his presence in this country for several years gave great stimulus to literary and scientific exertion. He was a liberal benefactor to Yale and Harvard Colleges and after his return to Ireland he sent to Yale a choice collection of the best works extant on the different branches of learning. These books are still preserved at Yale University. Some historical writers

⁷⁷ In *Providence Gazette* of July 3, 1813.

⁷⁸ *Providence Gazette*, February 2, 1789.

⁷⁹ REV. MASSENA GOODRICH, *Historical Sketches of Pawtucket, R. I.* Pawtucket, 1876.

⁸⁰ FREDERICK DENISON, in *Westerly and Its Witnesses for 250 Years—1626 to 1876*. Providence, 1878.

⁸¹ J. R. COLE, *History of Washington and Kent Counties, R. I.* New York, 1889.

attribute to England the honor of his fame. While his family is said to have been, in far back time, a branch of that of which the Earls of Berkeley were the heads, it had been settled in Ireland for many generations, and to that country, and to no other, belongs the distinction of having produced this illustrious educator and benefactor of Irish and American institutions.

It has not been the aim of this article to locate or discuss all of the early Irish teachers in New England, for the limitations of space render that impossible. Apart from those named herein, it is known that many other Irish schoolmasters flourished in New England in the olden days, although in most cases only fleeting glimpses of their names are obtainable from local annals, and there now remains no earthly record of the character of their services or how long they continued in their respective stations. Indeed, the records of many of the early teachers have all the sadness of a tombstone inscription, little to say beyond the name, date or place, and in most cases their names are recalled only in local tradition. Many of the Irish schoolmasters are seen to have conducted private or "select" schools, which often were more advanced than the "common" schools, and in many places a large number of the pupils who attended the private schools were the children of the well-to-do. This, in itself, is one of the best compliments which history can pay them, for it indicates that the Irish schoolmasters were considered more competent tutors than those who taught the common schools. In the early times, it was seldom that studies were permitted in the common schools beyond spelling, reading and writing, and arithmetic was taught by comparatively few instructors. From numerous advertisements by Irish schoolmasters in the colonial newspapers, it is seen that they usually announced their readiness to teach "reading, writing, arithmetic, surveying and the principal branches of mathematics," and in many instances "the Latin and Greek languages," thus indicating that they were more finished scholars than the ordinary teachers of the time. Indeed, in examining the early records, especially public documents written by men who occupied eminent positions during and after the Revolution, whose education was obtained from the private schools, one cannot but be surprised at the general intelligence and strength of intellect they display. As already stated, this subject is one that has been much neglected in history. This is not as it should be,

for the story of the early Irish schoolmasters of the country furnishes an important chapter in American history, and it is proper that Americans should know that Irish culture helped to embellish the minds of their fathers with the graces and treasures of learning. All the early benefactors of this country are not to be found among statesmen and soldiers, for the schoolmasters are also entitled to be so designated. They sought neither wealth nor place, and their emoluments were small. Many of them performed their tasks in remote and wild settlements. They consecrated their lives to the uplift of youth and gave themselves unselfishly and patriotically to the service of their country and humanity.

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